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Lane (Miss Alice Burville) was most pleasing when she did not sing. She acted well and looked ravishingly pretty, especially in her second costume, but her voice is just a trifle wiry, and her method an unknown quantity. *Susan* (Miss Rose Chappelle) has not very much to do, but that little was satisfactorily performed. I cannot, however, understand how it is that Miss Chappelle, who looks quite pretty when she stands or moves deliberately, should appear to resolve into nothing but arms and legs the moment she runs. A whole evening's study, with many opportunities for analysis of motion, failed to clear up this mystery. *Eliza Dabsey* (Miss Nellie Mortimer) should be considered one of the bright particular stars of the company. She has not a line to sing, and not very much to speak; but she impresses herself upon you as a real character, and you carry a very vivid remembrance of her away from the theatre with you.

Among the gentlemen, J. H. Ryley, as *Captain Flapper*, and A. W. F. McCollin, as *Ben Barnacle*, carry off the honors. *Ben Barnacle's* song, "All on Account of Eliza," is one of the unfailing successes of the opera, securing its four and five encores every evening; while the make-up and general presentation of the character are exceedingly good. Mr. Ryley's *Captain Flapper* is a real work of art; there is very little in the part itself, yet by his quiet humor, which creates "points" that did not exist as such in the libretto, he has endowed it with a most amusing individuality. Mr. Hamilton as *Christopher Crab*, and Mr. Seymour as *Sir Mincing Lane*, have comparatively small chance for effect; it is but just to them to say, however, that they make the best possible use of such as they happen to have.

Arnold Breeden, the *Billee Taylor* of the company, is a tenor with a rather small but sweet voice—a tenorino in fact—of somewhat limited compass, which he does not at all know how to use. The natural smoothness and sweetness of his voice is proved by the fact that his lack of knowledge does not make it unpleasant, it only deprives it of its carrying power. By far the larger part of his voice stays inside him. He sings in tune, however, and does not emulate many of his contemporaries by taking frantic and idiotic liberties with the music allotted to him. The most disagreeable impression produced by his singing is that of a lack of grip and manliness, a matter which might easily be remedied by a little well-directed study. Mr. Breeden has one gift which goes far to redeem his vocal failure in a light opera such as this, and this is the gift of unusual grace of motion. I have never seen anything more graceful than his movements in the duet with *Phæbe*, "Just Like This." If Mr. Breeden would work properly at his voice, he might soon become a very acceptable light opera tenor.

As produced at the Standard Theatre, the stage business of this operetta is something marvellous. This is due to the drilling and supervision of Charles Harris, who comes from the Covent Garden Theatre in London. The stage is kept alive with appropriate motion from the beginning to the end of the opera. The chorus is never allowed to stand idly in the two conventional rows on the stage, but is continually employed in giving life to the scene. The groupings, which seem to occur accidentally, are marvels of skilful design, and produce admirable effects of contrasted color. There are also countless episodes of combined motion among the principals which are far too impartially conceived and distributed to be the conception of any one of the parties actively engaged in them. The result of all this is to give the whole performance an effect of unity of design which is as rare as it is delightful; and which is unattainable save where one master mind is permitted to rule autocratically.

A word of praise must be given to Ernest Neyer for his thorough work in the musical drill of the chorus. So complete and numerous have been the rehearsals that even when, as is more than once the case, the major part of the chorus singers have their backs to the conductor, they sing with as much precision and unity as though they were staring directly at him and his directing baton.

As performed by this company, "*Billee Taylor*" is, and will continue to be, a great success. Badly or carelessly given, it would fall flat. Though there certainly is merit in the opera, abstractly considered, there is even more in the manner of its production; and it is on skilful production that it must always depend for the larger part of its success. C. F.

